



Press Release



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**Ranking Member, U.S. House Judiciary Committee
Dean, Congressional Black Caucus**

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Conyers Commends Decision to Bar Georgia's Voter ID Law

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman John Conyers, Jr., Ranking Member of the House Judiciary Committee issued the following statement regarding U.S. District Judge Harold Murphy's decision to issue a preliminary injunction preventing Georgia from enforcing its new voter identification law:

"I commend Judge Murphy for his decision to issue a preliminary injunction preventing Georgia from enforcing its new voter identification law. Judge Murphy and I both recognize that Georgia's new state law requiring voters to show identification at the polls amounts to nothing more than an unconstitutional poll tax.

During their day, poll taxes and literacy tests, which were also said to protect against fraud and breed confidence in elections, as the Georgia law purports to do, had the direct effect of erecting a barrier to minority voters. The Georgia law would prevent our most vulnerable communities, the minority, the poor, and the elderly, from voting. All Americans, regardless of race, economic status, or age are entitled to the most fundamental right of our democracy, the right to vote.

Just this afternoon, the Subcommittee on the Constitution held a hearing on the reauthorization of the Voting Rights Act. As we work to establish a record for reauthorization, today's decision barring Georgia's new voter ID law serves as evidence as to how crucial the Voting Rights Act is to ensuring that all of our citizens participate in the political process. If it were not for Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, this discriminatory law could very well be in effect now, thereby disenfranchising thousands of Georgia's voters.

Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act was passed for the express purpose of ensuring that jurisdictions with a history of discrimination against minority voters, like Georgia in this case, would be subject to vigorous oversight by the Justice Department. Any change with respect to voting in a covered jurisdiction cannot legally be enforced unless and until the jurisdiction first obtains preclearance. Further, preclearance requires proof that the proposed voting change does not deny or abridge the right to vote on account of race, color, or membership in a language minority group.

Judge Murphy could not be more right in his decision that the Georgia voter ID law does not pass muster under Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act."

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